

**SPECIAL MEETING  
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN  
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

**November 16, 2004**

**7:00 PM**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Forest.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Roy, Gatsas, Guinta, Osborne, Sysyn, Osborne, Porter,  
O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault, Forest

Mayor Baines advised that the first purpose of the special meeting was to have a presentation by Heritage United Way.

Linette Handschumaker, Community Building & Investment Director, Heritage United Way, stated we have recently completed an interpretation needs assessment and I came here tonight to share what we found about interpretation needs here in Greater Manchester. We had several objectives coming into the project and they were primarily to provide community stakeholders with quantitative data about interpretation needs in our community, to raise awareness about how interpretation needs impact services, to determine how to address those need, to collaborate with community stakeholders to develop interpreter training programs, educate LEP persons, which is limited English proficient persons, about interpretation resources, and to evaluate the communities response to Executive Order 13166, which is improving access to services to persons with limited English proficiency. The Executive Order primarily states that organizations that receive Federal financial assistance must offer and provide language assistant services including bilingual staff and interpreter services at no cost a patient or consumers with limited English proficiency at all points of contact in a timely manner and during all hours of operation. Although the Executive Order is not mandatory but voluntary, if they want to come and talk to you about whether or not you're meeting the requirements of the Executive Order, they can pull your funding if you're not. So much for voluntary. The project plan; the needs assessment included interviews of organizations who were determined to be dealing with interpretation needs as well as surveys. And we mailed out 1,375 surveys and received 253 responses. The needs assessment examined the demand, source of interpreter services, circumstances, and constraints to accessing services. By way of introduction, Greater Manchester experienced a

44.9 percent growth of it's immigrant and refugee population from 1990 to 2000 as evidenced in the 200 census and 26,500 people or 14.4 percent of people in Greater Manchester speak languages other than English, and out of that group of people about 33.3 percent speak English less than very well. So we're starting to feel the impact of certain constraints in our community. Limited English proficient or LEP persons do not speak English as their primary language, they have a very limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English and they also come from very different cultural backgrounds so that interpretation is not only just a language translation issue, but it involves cultural as well as the linguistic orientation piece. LEP persons may experience profound adjustment or transformation in their social identity. They require many more support systems from the community and they are typically at higher risk during medical or legal interactions that impact quality of life and have limited opportunities to secure stable and remunerative employer in the community. There were 253 respondents. Forty-two percent came from the social services world, 38 percent from the medical and dental community, 10 percent from human resources and 10 percent from the client/customer service area. Of the 253 survey respondents, 197 or 78 percent reported needing interpretation services at some time or another. By way of demographics, 58 percent of the responses came from Manchester and this was anticipated since Manchester is a federally designated refugee resettlement city and has the largest population of immigrants and refugees in New Hampshire. We do know that close to 600 refugees per year are settled or resettled in New Hampshire and that most live in Manchester or in Hillsborough County. As far as languages go, when we did the survey we went to ESL director in the Manchester school system and she provided us with a list of all 50 languages that were spoken in the Manchester school system at that time. Now you hear varying numbers such as 74 or 79, a lot of those are dialects within languages. So these are the pure languages. We asked for frequency of encounters for languages that required interpreter services from our respondents. We found out that the frequency for Spanish was 12 percent, then we had French and Bosnian at 7 percent, 6 percent was Russian and Vietnamese, 4 percent were the following: Serbian, Albanian, Arabic, Haitian, Cretian, Croatian, Portuguese, and Romanian, and then 71 percent was the representation of all other languages. In the graph there are 50 languages; I couldn't get 75 on that particular chart even if I tried. But here are the top six languages as you can see on the right. What I did next was I interpreted some of the data of languages as a regional representation of the frequency and what we found here was that it was not the Hispanic or Latino that came up first, but the bulk were the Balkan languages. So 25 percent frequency with Balkan, then it was the Asian, Hispanic, Latino, and African and Baltic. What this sort of indicates to us is that as world events go, so goes the increase in certain populations that impact these kinds of needs in our community. So we've been seeing unrest in the Balkan region, but now we know that there is significant unrest in Africa and certainly in the Baltic regions. So we may see a bump up in some of these numbers in the future. As far as demand to meet services, folks are telling us that they're meeting services adequately and some of them are doing it very well, but there's a group of folks that are doing it well at all and that's about 23 percent. We need to sort of discover for ourselves if adequate is good enough. As far as constraints

go, 54 percent of respondents reported that they are experiencing some constraints when accessing interpreter services and although 46 percent none, the remainder said that it was either financial constraints, lack of qualified interpreters, or time was of the essence and they couldn't get a hold of interpreters. Also under constraints when we look at the financial aspect what we found was that hiring interpreters is cost prohibitive since the rate can range from \$25.00 to \$60.00 per hour and up, and that is of course if you can find one and it can cost up to \$130.00 per language for language telephone lines and anecdotally we've been told time and time again that there can be serious flaws in language telephone lines as well. Again, under constraints in the financial piece of it, respondents told us that they are also unable to bill for third party reimbursements 75 percent of the time. This is sort of taking into consideration that when reimbursement is an option, the reimbursement rate is markedly reduced. Now the State of New Hampshire will reimburse interpreters as long as they are registered with the State. We don't have a State certificate program. There is really on one state in the entire United States that has a true certification process. We do certify interpreters but not to the extent that the State of Washington does. However, I will tell you that the State of New Hampshire is only one of nine states that does make funds available to reimburse interpreters and they are reimbursed at the rate of \$15.00 for the first hour and \$2.25 for each subsequent quarter hour. Services providers: interestingly bilingual employees are the first service providers when it comes to interpretation, family members are used next, and then we have staff interpreters, professional interpreters, and the interpreter phone line. When we looked at medical, dental and social service circumstances under which interpreters would be needed, we found that hospital, medical and office visits were 46 percent of the cases when interpreters were needed. We had laboratory, triage, appointment scheduling at 23 percent. After service hours was a small amount. Advance directives and then when we looked at the human resources population because we sort of looked at interpretation services from the outside in and from the inside out, from the customer service perspective as well. But in the human resources world, job training, employment applications, policies and procedures, interviews, new hire orientation, benefits and enrollment, emergency services, performance management, cultural sensitivity, and union enrollment. Job training of course being the largest piece of where interpreters would be needed. When we looked at customer services circumstances, we found that education and instruction in most any particular venue, whether it was government or business and industry or education, it was that piece of it that was the largest. Service calls and appointments, sales interactions 15 percent, contracts and leases, Police, court and legal was 8 percent, but again, these number reflect the population that responded to us in this survey. Parent teacher conferences 5 percent, emergency services 5 percent, and then other was 8 percent. So what are some of our findings? We have found through this report that the community does have a shortage of professional interpreters and while we are meeting our needs adequately, the use of interpreters is inconsistent within and across organizations. Organizations rely my often on bilingual employees or family members to meet their interpretation needs and often times a person's ability to speak a particular language is the only criteria used when seeking an interpreter, and while bilingual employees and family

members may be adequate for human resources and sales interactions, we know that using professional interpreter during medical, legal, Police, court, social service or education interactions could reduce the risk that may threaten our quality of life. Professional interpreters being those who are linguistically accurate, culturally sensitive, trained and proficient in the skill and ethics of interpreting and who are also knowledgeable about the specialized terms and concepts that need to be interpreted for purposes receiving specialized care. We also found out that hiring a professional interpreter is cost prohibitive and we need to determine what resources are available to meet and expand services. We need to collaborate with community stakeholders, develop communications and a market plan to highlight the resources currently available, track and evaluate implications of using individuals as interpreters based on their ability to speak a particular language, share services and materials and procure additional funding to distribute to ensure that the Executive Order is being fulfilled. We have a number of organizations that are already working with LEP persons to provide interpreter services. That is not an inclusive list, certainly, and then there are a whole host of folks that were involved in the development of this particular report. Reports are Heritage United Way or you can visit us at our web site and the report will be made available there as well.

Alderman DeVries asked I was just wondering if you could very briefly touch on the shared services and how you are developing through Heritage United Way maybe some cost effectiveness to assist the non-profits in the medical and legal communities in dealing with this particular concern.

Ms. Handschumaker answered well I think that one of the things that has to happen is we need to do a little more research to figure out what our assets that we have at present in the community, but certainly there's more work to be done with the medical interpretation advisory board and members of the legal community to ensure that we can start to develop a program especially around legal interpretation whereas the medical interpretation field has already graduated some 125 certificate interpreters statewide. We need to do some more work to make sure that we continue to fill gaps.

Alderman DeVries stated I just wanted to thank Heritage United Way for your assistance in collaborating to bring us this report.

Mayor Baines advised that the second purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Clem Lemire, 71 Hulme Street, Manchester, stated:

I am here this evening because I want to tell the people of Manchester and the taxpayers that I am definitely opposed to the plan blowing up of Maxwell Pond dam. I expressed my opinion at the previous hearing at the Northwest Elementary School and will continue to fight for the good our great city. If you people allow removing one of the valuable ponds it could well result in losing others down the line. I believe this removal plan is spearheaded by Federal money going through State agencies. According to news releases the local quarterback is Arthur Grindle an employee of the Highway Department and so called coordinator of the Manchester Urban Parks Restoration Program. The title of Grindle's organization is grossly misleading. The nuns taught me in elementary school that restoration is bringing back the former position and condition not blowing up a dam and losing a pond. Manchester can't afford to lose any of its water services. They are too important in the urban setting both historically and environmentally. Transformation and its value in an urban setting is not generally understood by the ordinary public. This passage of water reed vapor in our atmosphere from the lakes and ponds makes for a healthier living area. We need all of the water services we can maintain especially with the tens of thousands of vehicles passing through and around our city putting out tons of carbon monoxide all over the place. Our lungs don't need this; neither do our trees, flowers and gardens. The present lack of pond depth at Maxwell was not caused by natural reclamation, as the proponents of the bombing of the dam would lead you to believe. We removed over two feet of boards that held a higher level in the pond years back during the dam repairs. The repairs were needed as a result of an overnight flash flood. We were unable to remove the boards so the high water level washed out an area where the playground equipment now sits. The State group will enhance their position with color slides and programs from other towns. That's all well and good, however, and again, Manchester can't afford to lose its ponds, dams and wetlands. There is also a historical factor here. We must save the ponds to provide past generations with household ice, our pond provided that. Our present generation know only how to open the refrigerator door and fetch ice cubes. In my case a beer. That's sad. Also the pond sits on Blodget Pond after Captain Samuel Bolt of the revolution era. He was a fighter and builder; a man who would fight to save the dam if he were alive today. If it's trout that they are worrying about, Federal money could be obtained to build a mini fish ladder. I would think that the Conservation Commission would be fighting to save the pond for its water surface and wetlands. Cities around the country spend six and seven figures to build ponds and waterfalls to enhance their city with its expensive operating costs. Here in Manchester we have a perfect sight to add beauty to the area. The ugly chain link fence could be removed along the old 3A and replaced by historic rustic fence and a floodlight to accentuate the beauty of water cascading over the top of the dam at night. Inexpensive beauty. Another are that could be beautified at very little expense is that of Pine Island Pond dam. All that needs to be done is clear the brush on both sides of the outlet brook; this would open the view to Brown Avenue where thousands of cars drive by each day and night. They would be able to a quick look at another beautiful sight of seeing water cascading over a dam. This

would add beauty to our modern and busy airport entrance. I'm not sure where the dam repair figure came from. I want to dispute them, however, if really needed, why can't the Federal money available be rerouted for repairs and constructing beautiful trails along both sides of the brook. This could be accomplished also with the addition of volunteers from local schools, colleges, and conservation groups pitching in over the next few years. Hopefully you will better understand the value of our ponds in our city and refuse the plan to remove them. At the first hearing we ended up by saying no way am I going to allow the dam to be bombed out. I'll chain myself to granite blocks and you can remove it over my dead body. Well in case you allow them to bomb the dam before the holidays, which will cause my demise, I want to wish you tonight the happiest Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Jeff Kassel, 22 Appleton Street, Manchester, stated:

I'm going to begin with a story. This guy was at heaven's gate, St. Peter was up there and said have you done anything of note in your life. And he said there was one thing. It was this woman that was changing a tire by the side of the road in Minot, North Dakota and a motorcycle gang came and they crowded around her and they started to tug at her and harass her and pull at her clothing and he said I jumped in there and I told them you guys have to stop this, and of course they didn't pay any attention to me so I picked the biggest guy, grabbed him by the shirt, I punched him in mouth, I grabbed his beard and tore half of it off and then I pulled a nose ring out of his nose and I said "Anyone touches this woman, they're going to answer to me." St. Peter looked at the guy and he said that's kind of impressive, when did that happen. He looked at his watch and he said just a couple of minutes ago. Maybe you don't think that's a funny joke. I thought it was funny but I thought it also had a point and I'm going to let the Aldermanic Board and the Mayor decide where that really fits into the scheme of things, but recently I got this... Do you know what this is? It's my tax bill. This was your gift to me and of course we had another tax increase this year, I'm a member of Concerned Taxpayers, this year I also happen to be Chairman and I'll probably be lucky to finish out my term after last night's meeting. But I was wondering if maybe I could get the Mayor or one or two Alderman to come back with me in one of the conference rooms to hold my hand or something and maybe put their arm around me while I open this tax bill to kind of calm me down. Thank you.

Representative Peter Sullivan, 85 Blodget Sullivan, Manchester, stated:

I have written correspondence for the members of the Board. I come here this evening to express my opposition to the proposed increase in fees to be assessed against residents who have had their cars towed during emergencies. Simply stated, this proposal is unjustified and unjust. The proposed increase amounts to \$40.00, more or less. According to published reports only \$5.00 of that amount is to be retained by the City of Manchester. The best I can tell is the remaining \$35.00 goes into the pockets of a handful of private towing companies. In other words, this plan is a welfare program for a handful of politically connected business owners. There's absolutely no justification, economical or otherwise for an increase of this

magnitude. The reality of the situation is that existing fuel and labor costs do not warrant such a steep hike in fees. The only remaining motive is the desire to exploit a legitimate city function for an inflated personal gain. This proposal fee increase also amounts to yet another hidden tax on the people who can least afford one. The people most often subject to emergency towing are those that live in the neighborhoods in the center city, downtown, and in parts of the west side. The families and individuals in these neighborhoods often live paycheck to paycheck. Now \$125.00 might not sound like much to someone who lives on North Bay Street, but for the immigrant family on Cedar Street or the single mom on Kelley Street or Auburn Street, it could mean the difference when it comes to being able to pay the rent, pay the light bill, or pay for your gas every month. No one is denying that snow emergency towing is a legitimate public function. We all know that it's essential for public safety, however, let's not use it as an excuse either for squeezing more revenue out of working families, or to provide a favor for a handful of politically connected towing companies. I respectfully ask that the Board do the right thing and keep the towing fees at their current level and reject the proposed increase.

Robin Comstock & Chris Williams, 889 Elm Street, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, stated:

It was brought to the Chamber's attention earlier this week that the Board of Aldermen would be voting tonight on an issue related to the increases of fees for the City owned monthly garage passes. The Chamber has not taken an official position on this issue; however, we would like to raise several observations and concerns for your consideration tonight. It gives us cause to wonder if this issue should be given just a little more time to consider. We base this opinion on several facts. First, there seems to be a lack of clarity as to how much revenue this increase in fees will actually produce. If it's true that we don't know how much revenue this would generate, perhaps more time should be given to the issue. Second, several statements in the paper in committee hearings regarding this issue have alluded to the fact that Manchester's garages are the lowest among other cities in the state and, therefore, can be afford to be raised. These statements are not accurate. Chamber research revealed that the City of Nashua has rates that are almost half our current fee level and Concord is right on par with our current fee level. Portsmouth is the only city to have higher fees than Manchester, which it justifies on the high-density downtown businesses and the subsequent demand for leased parking. As we're all aware, downtown Manchester is far from capacity. In fact currently there's a glut of available office and garage spaces also available. Third, the city has been working with the Chamber and the MDC and other organizations to make Manchester's downtown a friendly environment that welcomes potential new business owners. Raising this fee, while not a major increase, sends a subtle message that we're not willing to listen to the needs of business owners. If you read this weeks issue of New Hampshire Business Review, if it haven't seen it, this week's cover looks like this, there was a report of a downtown business that recently left primarily because of parking issues. Business has a choice of locating where parking is provided and free or coming to a downtown where parking has the charge. This article and others that may

follow influence potential business and residents. If tomorrow's readers pick up the *Union Leader* to see that we've raised the fees, it may serve to further damage the progress we've made in recent years in making Manchester's downtown a more user friendly atmosphere. Finally, based on these concerns, the Chamber believes that this issue can be better addressed with careful research. For the past several months the City Planning Department has been putting together the framework for a comprehensive study on the downtown area. This comprehensive look at the downtown will include a look at parking issues related to garages, parking meters and surface lots. And I know you get so much paperwork, but one of the reports looks like this one, and again, we're happy to provide it. I'm sure you're quite familiar. The Planning Department has already put this study out to bid and is expected to start the study in early 2005. The Chamber believes that the issue of raising the parking garage fees could be more wisely addressed under this study. If the study comes back with a recommendation to raise the fees, the Chamber will be happy to support it at that time. However, we ask tonight why rush forward with a fee increase at this particular juncture, when the City's sponsored study will be exploring studies like this within just a few months. Therefore, we ask that you table this proposed fee increase tonight and further discuss our suggestion of the City sponsored study.

Jane Beaulieu, 609 South Main Street, Manchester, stated:

The reason that I'm here this evening is I was here last night to present to the Lands & Buildings Committee about the Bass Island project. Specifically the City acquiring the blacksmith shop and the CEP money available to do so, but it was tabled and I wanted to ensure that we were able to take up this matter before the end of the year, because the \$100,000 needs to be transferred into a City account from the CEP funds and it has been allocated for Bass Island. So I wanted to make sure that all of you Aldermen, especially the Land & Buildings Committee, make a motion to accept that money to put it towards Bass Island and to within the next month have a meeting about the blacksmith shop. I provided the Lands & Buildings Committee with information that I've put together with Bob MacKenzie and Ron Johnson about the blacksmith shop and that total project. If I can be ensured that it's going to be heard before the end of the year, that way that \$100,00 will be set aside for Bass Island. I can't afford to lose it after four years of fighting for it. So if we can take that up at the next meeting and make a decision on it, I would truly appreciate it.

Mayor Baines stated Alderman Thibault will take your comments under advisement.

Nicole Rebecca, 19 Hillcrest Avenue, Manchester, stated:

I am here to discuss the reclassification of Hillcrest Avenue from a Class VI highway to a Class IV highway. I am very, very opposed to this because of a few reasons. Number one, if reclassification takes place, the builders plan to disturb the ledge, which runs under most of our homes, between West Hillcrest and Hillcrest Avenue, which includes blasting that I've heard from certain sources. I'm very sorry for my unpreparedness today because I just found out from the *Union Leader* correspondence that I've been touch with that this taking place

tonight. So I apologize for that. Another reason that we should be against this is because the city water that runs up to most our homes already have problems pressure, there's a lot of low pressure, there's also water run off problems in a lot of the areas, and I think that a lot of the Aldermen in the past have also said no to this type of reclassification because of those reason. I'm not quite sure which Aldermen they were; I was told it was about 15 years ago, but again, it causes concern to me because I am right across the street from that particular location.

Stephanie Lewry, Executive Director of Intown Manchester, 70 Park Avenue, stated:

I just wanted to for the record let everybody know that the Christmas tree this year is going to be in Stanton Plaza. Stanton Plaza is the area directly across from Veteran's Park in front of the Center of New Hampshire Hotel. If you came in today through the City Hall Plaza entrance, you may have noticed that there are a couple of trees at the entrance to the stairway and then there's another small tree in the center of the plaza, which has been decorated just this afternoon by some children who are in the after school program at the YWCA. We are hoping that maybe in the future we'll have after other school programs participating in helping to make City Hall Plaza look like a wonderful place to decorate a Christmas tree. If you recall last year, we did have the large Christmas tree at City Hall Plaza and a very big gust of wind blew it down, taking down two of the light poles that it was attached to. So we have had to move it this year and I just wanted everybody to see that it is up already. It's been installed, it hasn't been decorated yet, but it's a gorgeous tree, and it's at Stanton Plaza. So many people don't know what Stanton Plaza is or where it is. Now you will know. Stanton Plaza named for a former Mayor of Manchester is directly in front of the Center of New Hampshire hotel.

Mayor Baines advised that if there is no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman DeVries, duly seconded by Alderman Roy, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on motion of Alderman Thibault, duly seconded by Alderman Porter, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk